

VZCZCXRO9268
OO RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR
DE RUEHRH #1525/01 3201436
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 161436Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1929
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA IMMEDIATE 1714
RUEHDH/AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE 0332
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH IMMEDIATE 0439

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 001525

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP JHARRIS AND JBERNDT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/15/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [SA](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: SAG EFFECTIVELY PROVIDING FOR GROWING NUMBER OF
IDPS

REF: A. 09 RIYADH 1494
[1](#)B. 09 RIYADH 1470
[1](#)C. 09 RIYADH 1478

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Susan Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

[1](#)1. (C) Since the Saudi-Yemen border conflict began on November 3, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has been rapidly increasing, and is now estimated at 8,000 persons. As a result of the border security threat, an estimated 240 villages and 51 schools have been evacuated or closed. However, it appears that the SAG is effectively coordinating across multiple ministries and organizations to deal with the increasing number of IDPs. This supports information received from a UNHCR official and indicates that Saudi IDPs are being well-provided for (reftel A). However, UNHCR completed a new border security assessment as of November 15 which should shed additional light on the humanitarian situation along the Saudi border. Post expects a read-out on the recent assessment from UNHCR this week (septel to follow). End Summary and Comment.

IDPS ON THE RISE

[1](#)2. (C) According to UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 240 villages have reportedly been evacuated due to the border conflict with Yemen (reftels B and C). Although the SAG has indicated that they have secured the border, four civilians have reportedly been killed since the fighting began November

[1](#)3. Various news sources are reporting a growing number of IDPs and currently, there are approximately 8,000 IDPs in the southern border region. (Note: There are an estimated 200,000-300,000 Saudis living in the border region. End Note.) As of November 11, Saudi Gazette reported that the largest Saudi refugee camp, Ahad Al-Masreha, had 1,623 families living in approximately 400 tents. However, Ahmed Raghey, the coordinator of the camp, told Saudi Gazette that he expects the number of refugees to increase over the coming days.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In order to deal with the growing number of IDPs, the ministries of Finance, Health, and Communications, along with the electricity and water boards have been working closely with Saudi Civil Defense to ensure Ahad Al-Masreha and the other refugee camps are fully equipped with tents, furnishings, blankets, lighting and daily living necessities.

Each family is entitled to SR 1,000 (USD 267) per week and an additional SR 200 (USD 53) for each child. The National Society for Human Rights (NSHR), a quasi-governmental organization, has been working with local authorities to ensure services and humanitarian relief for all evacuees.

SAUDI YOUTH IN ACTION

¶4. (SBU) Additionally, Saudi Civil Defense is harnessing the energy and goodwill of volunteers from Jizan University, technical colleges, high schools, and members of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) who are working together to assist the refugees. Volunteers are helping to distribute blankets, meals and water, as well as guiding families to the camps once they have registered with Civil Defense.

PROTECTING THEIR OWN

¶5. (SBU) There have also been reports of tribesmen arming themselves in order to protect local residents from the threat of infiltrators from Yemen by standing watch from 3pm until dawn. Saudi Gazette reported that one village, Al-Raha in the South of Jizan, captured several infiltrators who have subsequently been handed over to the local authorities.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

¶6. (SBU) The Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) has suspended classes in about 51 boys and girls schools along the

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Saudi-Yemen border. In a statement to Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Shuja al-Qahtani, head of the General Administration of Boys Education in the Jazan area, revealed that his administration, in coordination with the Civil Defense Administration, is prepared to close an additional 30 schools if necessary. Additionally, al-Qahtani's administration has instructed all schools in the region to accept displaced students, and is currently shifting teachers affected by the school closures to nearby schools. Abd-al-Aziz al-Mahdawi, Director of the General Administration of Girls Education in the Jazan area, also reported a similar plan for all girls' schools in the border region.

SMITH